[From "Die Männerinsel" pp13-28]

An English Student Hostel 1914.

"St. Leonard's-on-Sea,[i] Hillcrest School,[ii] July 1914"

I have no wish to be superstitious, but just as the train pulled out of the station at Berlin-Zoo, and just as I was calling out 'See you again', I heard a deep voice below me call out '*Never ever* see you again'; perhaps the voice of a track worker, but his threat sounded out for a long time in the rhythm of the wheels, and even now I still have to think about it, despite having landed safe and sound in England.

The house into which I was coming did not present a picture inspiring very much confidence. A former vicar had opened up a holiday home for students in St. Leonard's-on-Sea, and his prospectus had painted life with him in the most cheerful colours. According to the prospectus every guest in his house would grow and flourish in body and mind. But, lo and behold, standing on the railway platform was an athletic figure in tweeds, a pipe of smoky shag in his mouth, while the collar buttoned up round the back of his neck was the only thing reminding anyone of his former ecclesiastical dignity. He welcomed me jovially like an old acquaintance, and then hoisted my very large cabin trunk on his shoulder and carried it into a taxi, and then likewise up into the third floor of his house. There were five beds standing in my room, and nothing else besides, in compensation for which the reverend pointed, like a landlady, to the splendid view over the Channel, as though he were its happy owner. 'Smooth as glass,' he whinnied, and swallowed the wrong way on the cloud of smoke coming from his pipe. In the small entrance hall, I was made acquainted with the female counterpart of this establishment, Miss Lilian, a typical English thick-head, badly made up and with [p.14] a mouth that glinted gold. He introduced her as his sister.— There was a most peculiar smell, but that came from a stuffed mastiff, which couldn't stand the heat. Meals were taken in the basement, for these the 'students', i.e. schoolboys aged from nine to sixteen, most of them on holiday from London, one red-headed boy even stemmed from New Zealand. To say grace, the reverend removed his pipe for the first time from his mouth, then with good mien he passed round the very modest portions of an unlovingly cooked meal, his fatherly grin certainly intended to compensate the disappointed faces.

I was given a somewhat larger portion, which was perhaps arranged according to the boarding price. Most of the boys got up again hungry. Mr Mather Smith[iii] then took me through a sandy back-garden with an overnight tent in it, out to the nearby beach. On it stood rickety deckchairs and a gramophone, on which 'The Bells of St. Malo'[iv] was wobbling around. The air was good and plentiful, I declined a newspaper to read, and for my edification instead took up a detective novel. The evening meal was again very simple, but the reverend spoke incessantly, so that people did not properly notice the fact. At night some of the boys slept in the tent, the others in the uncurtained room. They were up as early as five o'clock in the morning, to accompany the reverend to make purchases at the fish market.

I was very much disappointed with the first few days, and took comfort in the fact that it wouldn't have to go on for very long. In any case, my parents were going to meet me in fourteen days. The arrival of a pupil from Paris brought me a change, inasmuch as he was not embarrassed to show his displeasure with everything in England. He pushed the plate at table far away from him, and folded his arms over his chest. He found everywhere draughty, in the mornings he did not want to get out of bed, and everything that Mr Smith suggested to him he rejected with a screwed up nose, or a raising of his shoulders. I was the only one who understood his language, [p. 15] and he moaned that he wanted to go back to France: 'They're fools here.'

A few days later a father brought his son down from London, it was Ted Gibson, who seemed to come from a good house and with whom I got on well. He had brought his tennis gear with him, and we played almost every day. However, he seemed to know nothing about Germany, neither the geography nor anything else. He had once been to Switzerland and thought that Berlin was somewhere near that, but about the French he expressed himself just as uncomprehendingly as Renéé had done to me about England and its customs. One weekend his father travelled with us to Battle Abbey, which now belongs to a rich American, and we saw the spot where King Harold had fallen in battle against William the Conqueror. In those days, the island was still conquerable.

The landscape is idyllic everywhere and like a gigantic 'English Garden'. These little ivy-clad Tudor cottages with cats resting on the window-sills, these picturesque groups of trees, these bramble hedges, and on everything a peaceful, lush, atmosphere, redolent of long-assured tradition; I felt this end-of-life attraction of a great empire on a small island time and time again when I was wandering around with the Ted, who understands me, in constantly sunny weather in the surrounding area. We also occasionally allow ourselves special meals, because the for-ever rhubarb was making us heartily sick. We're thinking of moving out to somewhere else soon, because nothing here is in its proper place, and Miss Lilian tries out new hairdos, instead of attending to the paying guests. It is also great fun on the pier at the Follies. 'Hello, Hello, Who's Your Lady-Friend?'[v] we already know it off by heart. Watching the anglers gets on your nerves, where do you find such persistence in doing nothing and hoping? In the evenings the spa orchestra plays in the illuminated pavilion on the beach, but with gusto and very loud, like the Salvation Army, or the Fire Brigade on Sundays. Despite this, a devotionally-listening [p. 16] audience sits around for hours on end on the sea of benches. Yesterday I went with Ted into Alexandra Park, where a garden party was being held for the guests who had come across from the seaside resorts in France. René was our disgruntled guide. Chinese lanterns hung in the trees, the fountains were lit up in colour. A red-jacketed 'Genuine Hungarian Band' played pieces like 'Demoiselle Chic',[vi] 'The Dancing Mistress'[vii] and 'Puppchen, du bist mein Augenstern'.[viii] Three French ragamuffins put on airs and called out constantly for the 'Marseillaise' to be played, and it was played, but it was rounded off with 'God Save The King'. In the darker parts of the park, innumerable couples stood like statues holding each other in an embrace, during which time René took pleasure in flashing his pocket lamp at them.

Something was happening every day; today on the cricket ground, there was a fairground with Punch and Judy, roundabouts, and an American Negro Band. In the tea-tent ladies were serving the public. The charming Evelyn spotted us straightaway and brought tea and biscuits, but already Miss Lilian, dressed as a shepherdess, had spotted us too, and this time wasn't offering us rhubarb, but Turkish delight, which she hawked around on a tray strapped to her midriff. Miss Evelyn made a face and then broke into a giggle. Tomorrow we'll be playing tennis together again. The way home on the long beach promenade was magnificent. The moon stood out above the Channel, the lights on the pier were reflected in the water. Now and again a rocket went up, trailing out a blaze of light, the sky seemed to stand still. We looked long out from the window and followed a festively-lit steamer as it made its way to the French coast.

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[p. 17]

"St. Leonard's-on-Sea, end of July 1914"

I can't get going with my writing, from sheer idleness. I have been here now for half a month and have recuperated myself well enough already. Now my parents are also coming here next week, that's when I'm going to leave St. Leonard's. The reverend is giving out smaller and smaller portions at table, and does not take it amiss that Lilian, his 'sister', runs around the whole day—even at table—in her bathing costume and neglects the guests; he, it seems, lives for his part on his pipe-tobacco, cracks dirty jokes, at which he himself is the main one to laugh and is more interested in the boxing-bouts of Carpentier,[ix] who was welcomed like a god in London, and whose boxing is shown in cinemas everywhere. The boys seem to be quite content. Johnny goes with the reverend practically every morning at five o'clock to buy the fish in, the red-headed New Zealander fiddles around tirelessly with his model aeroplane, while Poppy, the girl next door, tries in vain to rouse him from his peace and quiet. Keith Tucker, the 17-year-old, reads detective stories the whole day long on the beach, and sticks his index finger in his mouth as he does so.

Today, incidentally, the reverend has completed the building of his bathing hut, and set up the old gramophone in it, he sits there now, smokes his pipe and reads his newspapers. René is the only one scarcely ever to be seen, he lounges around on his bed and writes letters of complaint to Paris, saying he wants to go home, he can't stand it here in England. My sole companion remains Ted, with whom I play tennis every day,

or else we lie in the lukewarm water of the sea and listen to the music from the pier. The weather is unbrokenly splendid, no cloud to be seen, and every day the reverend says the same thing: 'The sea is again smooth as glass and hot as toast'; at which he laughs, as if that had been a joke. But at night, the moon shines out across a sea which simultaneously separates [p. 18] and unites France and England. I often think that my life is about to become serious; where shall I serve out my 12 months? In cosy Bavaria or with the Kaiser Franz Regiment in Berlin? [x] — Ah well, here comes Ted to take me away to the last few days of the 'French Gala Week' in Hastings. Fireworks, illuminations, dancing in the open air. Many French people have come across from Boulogne and Trouville. Next week it's the same in Deauville for English people. Perhaps I'll have a trip across there with my parents. …

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"St. Leonard's-on-Sea, beginning of August 1914"

Chasms separate these lines from the last ones I entered in my diary. What has come between, despite their lying so close together on the paper? I will attempt to gather my thoughts, and to do that I have shut myself up in the 'good room'; but it seems to me that I must now describe a dream which follows a night of high fever. Was it like that? I should like to tear open the window and shout out to the first passer-by I find: 'Hey, what's been happening? Is the world mad, is this country about to fall with the rest into a most horrible state of war, or is it only in my imagination? — No, it is all the sober truth. I still remember, oh how long, long ago it seems to be, how I lay on the beach, finishing my reading the German novel, 'The Terror of the Nations';[xi] it was the first, roasting-hot day of August, and the air was shimmering. On that wonderful day I thought I was lying by the Mediterranean Sea, on Homer's own shores. So transparent, so wine-coloured was the tide. It glistened far and wide around, as though fiery metal had been poured out. Strips of foam rolled up and toppled over each other as if in play. The vault of the sky was full of bronze blue-green clarity. The world was so beautiful! — Then I heard my name being called out, it was Ted's voice. He had already reached me, he held a bundle of newspapers in his hand and said only: 'Now it has [p. 19] happened'. I glanced bewildered at the headlines 'Germany has declared war on Russia and France'. Is that really true? (I still can't grasp it properly even now.) And what will England do, will it remain neutral or will it go in with Germany against the ancient arch-enemy? 'I don't know — I don't think so', said Ted, how could he know that? I leapt out of bed and ran with him out of the house. Miss Lilian, with a tragic gesture, gave me her hand, as though she wanted to console me, Keith Tucker grinned, the other boys stood around in silence. I rushed to the post-office, to send off a telegram to Berlin for money to travel. The post-office miss at the counter said 'At your own peril', then I very suddenly began to sense how the general order of things was beginning to disintegrate, then I felt that an island can have something alarming about it. I very slowly turned back and saw René pushing off in a taxi, with no greeting to me; he can go back to France, and tomorrow he'll be back home. But shortly after that the special editions announced that England had prohibited all traffic to the Continent. Was everybody on the island to remain captive? The reverend had gone off to Dover. On the beach, the life-guard was telling people that that very day he had to report to his naval section in Portsmouth. The paper-boys bellowed out: 'Luxembourg invaded by the Germans, the Grand-Duchess taken prisoner.' Ted remained my loyal companion, he said he would take a course as medical orderly.

'Why?' I asked.
'Well, if England declares war: I'm in the Boys Scouts.'
'Declares war on whom?'
'I hope it's not on Germany', he said, dodging the question.

The reverend roared up on a motor-bike, and with a grin swung a sealed letter around his head. He took the bike into the schoolroom, and everybody surrounded him.

'I've got my Commission, now I've got to go to the Drill-Hall', and off he went again. [p. 20]

I waited impatiently for the reply from Berlin. In the meantime we walked down the beach promenade to Hastings. The music pavilion was illuminated, crowds stood around, the French, Russian,

Belgian national anthems were being played and applauded, then came 'God Save The King', the tune of which is similar to *Hail To Thee In Victor's Crown*,[xii] which is why I listened to it with satisfaction. When I got back home, there was no telegram waiting for me near the stuffed dog in the vestibule. How might things look now at home? I couldn't eat anything for the evening meal and went straight up to my bedroom. The boys pointed to lights on the sea, and said they were Russian warships, coming to the help of the French. My bed stands at the window, and I kept looking out of the window for hours. Outside everything was darkness, only the occasional points of stars and the pale reflection on the sea, that completely colourless fluorescence, which moved towards the horizon as if propelled by gusts of wind. The magic of the night and eternity, which causes such inexplicable anxiety and presentiments of death in the human being. The surf beat thunderously on to the beach, I felt the harmony of the disturbance in Nature with the one that was in me and in the whole of humanity. If only the telegram would come tomorrow, when I could travel off like René, if only England would remain neutral, if only — if only; I dreamt of the novel 'The Terror of the Nations' and saw the inventor of the terrifying explosive material circling around over the Grand Fleet assembled at Spithead, and destroying it in a great clap of thunder.

Keith Tucker woke me up in the early morning; he, who up till now had always been on the side-lines, gulping down his detective stories, seemed now to be in his element and with fervent satisfaction radiated terror items of news. Some of them were already back with us, like bad pennies: 'the Germans have moved into Belgium and are besieging Liége'; 'a French ship has captured thirty million in gold, which was on its way to Germany'; 'the Goeben is bombarding Algerian towns'. [p. 21]

When I came down again, who was I saw? None other than René. He had been held back at Dover, because of a ban that would last for six weeks; he raged, chewed up his handkerchief and cursed England, but apart from me, nobody understood what he said. I was in the same position, perhaps I wouldn't be allowed to leave, either. Why not, though? That all contradicts international law! Am I not a free man who must go back? The most freedom-boasting country on earth was showing itself from an incomprehensible side, and I quietly cursed as much as René. If I could only just finally get news from home, but that too is perhaps being withheld. I thought in desperation of all possible people I could turn to. But perhaps news is still on its way. (I haven't had it, not yet, even today!) So I went with Ted to Hastings, to find out there whether there was anything new. There, in Hastings, special editions were once more being bawled out, everybody was standing around and reading: 'England has sent Germany an ultimatum.' '1800 marriages took place yesterday in Berlin,' '80,000 German reservists besiege the German Consulate in London and fiercely demand the journey home!'

The reverend was not in evidence at home. Miss Lilian had left the household in a state of abandon, there was nothing to eat. In the evenings the promenade and the pier were bathed in a sea of flame, as though a feast of jubilation were being celebrated. The national anthems sounded out blaringly. Ted is going to write to his parents, to see whether I can wait out events with them in London. But what use is that, something is going to have to happen. I want to get away, but not to London, to Berlin instead, which is where my place is.

Again I looked out from my bed over the darkness of the Channel as though into a dark future. It was midnight, and the ultimatum was running out. I instinctively thought of Homer's fine scene, where the father of the gods sat down on Mount Ida, and held the scales of fate of the nations in his hands.

[p. 22]

"St. Leonard's-on-Sea, Hillcrest School, 6th August"

The radiance of the sun awoke me. The boys had all spent the hot and sticky night in the sleeping tent in the garden. Nobody seemed to be at home. Then Miss Lilian in hair curlers came from out of the 'parlour', she had tear-stained eyes, I stopped her; 'Telegram?' She shook her head, pointed to the room I was going into, shut the door behind me and left me alone. Spread out on the table was a special edition of the newspaper. One glance was enough: 'England has declared war on Germany'. Now I knew what it was. At first I felt as though the news of a death had arrived from home, then came a sober feeling, which every certainty brings with it, and at the same time a stupor. Mechanically I sat down on a chair, deep silence in the house and outside. What did I know of the deeply-vested political motives which were behind these

disasters? In school, we did learn inside out about the causes of the Peloponnesian War, the Punic War, perhaps even the war of 1870 — and here I remember, when we were taking the *Abitur* in Hannover, that a supporter of the Royal House of Hanover[xiii] had failed the exam because mentioned the reworked telegram of Bismarck — , but what happened after these events remained *terra incognita*.[xiv] We were unobservant spectators in the theatre of world events, while all the time directing behind the scenes was going on, and now the building suddenly goes up in flames. Perhaps in twenty years' time we'll find out what was really going off behind all this, and who had started the fire. The majesty of the deed takes all our senses in thrall. Some will cry out: 'Run for your lives', the others: 'All hands on deck.' In the meantime, we fish in troubled waters. And what can I do? I am left completely to my own devices, superfluous to everybody else, only of the greatest importance to myself. I'm leaving my diary writing, as much these discussions hearten me. I'm going to approach Prince R…, Ambassador in Madrid, and Envoy Bo…; in Lisbon, the father of my school-friend [p. 23], first of all to obtain travel to there. The reverend will have to come with me to the Consulate in London, it is high time for something decisive to happen.

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Time has passed again, events come rushing on, in accordance with the laws of falling bodies, only I don't get a step further. No success with home, money is petering out. The reverend thought it was better for him to go alone to London. I waited up till late in the night, frantic for his return. It was two o'clock when he awakened me; I staggered out of bed. He spoke of the exciting scenes he had seen in the Capital, of the enormous enthusiasm of the crowd on Trafalgar Square, of the mob attacks on German dwellings because the rumour was going round that they concealed dynamite and caches of arms. He had seen how whole pianos had been thrown out of windows onto the street and how some Germans had been literally massacred as spies. The Consul's house, he said, had been surrounded by thousands of reservists, who were shouting their praises of the Kaiser[xv] and singing patriotic songs. It had been almost impossible, he continued, to push in at the densely packed staircase. He had stood there for hours, until the Consul General had appeared and called out: 'I can't help you and have surrendered my post. Everybody must get back to the Homeland on his own, I have no money.' An indescribable tumult followed, the police came up on horses, arrested countless numbers, the mob had barged in, and the reverend himself had got mixed up in a brawl. Finally he remarked that if I were not yet of age to serve, then I would be eligible for exchange, along with the women and children. I turned over these enticing words in my mind for the rest of the night.

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[p. 24]

"St. Leonard's-on-Sea, August 1914"

Keith Tucker's morning words of greeting were: 'Holland has declared war on Germany, 80,000 Germans thrown back at Liége,[xvi] a patriotic crowd has stormed the German Embassy in St. Petersburg, the cruiser Panther has been sunk.'

The boys had all run to the Drill-Hall, because the Scouts had been called up. So I went on my own into the countryside, wandering round for many hours, I saw Miss Lilian blithely playing tennis, and continued further on my way. It had become midday and then turned to afternoon. Visions of bomber squadrons over Berlin, of the death of my relatives and friends followed me constantly, finally I sat down beneath a lonely group of fine trees, sheep were grazing around, their bleating had something soothing about it, I found it stupid to talk of stupid sheep. I had put a volume of Schopenhauer[xvii] in my pocket, now I wanted to check it for an example, I opened it, and read:

'If you have gained a world's possession,
Be not in joy for this, it is nought.
And if you have lost a world's possession,
Be not in sorrow for this, it was nought.
Joys and delights are passing things,
Walk on past the world, it is nought.'

The sun went down behind the hills, the dance of the bats began, the cicadas chirped tirelessly. A strange mood surrounded me, and as if reformed I walked composed through meadows and hedgerow paths, back into that 'world suffering from its will'.

There stood the reverend, come home from Dover in a brand-new uniform, and was having a drink with other officers, while Miss Lilian, nicely made up, joined in with them; Ted, who wants to become a doctor's assistant on a warship, persuaded me to go with him to the cinema: [p. 25] *Britain's Pride*, the Review of the British Fleet at Spithead, was shown and wildly applauded. I kept calling up to mind the words I had read: 'It is nought'.

In the meantime the first English warships have been sunk, H.M.S. *Amphion* and *Birmingham*. Hurrah! The *Goeben* and *Breslau* have been sold to Turkey.

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Forty thousand Germans are reported to have fallen at Liége, but the Kaiser is said to have proclaimed nothing but victory bulletins from his balcony. The reverend told me at midday that all foreigners must get themselves registered immediately. I went to the police station. I had no papers, up to eight days before I had not needed any, and passports had existed only in Russia and Turkey. On the way to the police, I thought that if I weren't of military age, I could be exchanged. I read a placard, which threatened false statements with imprisonment. Asked for my personal details, I stated that I had been born in December 1898, and was given the appropriate identity document. I have to report every week. In front of me a German barber had registered, the official asked for his nationality. 'Bavarian', he answered. 'We are not at war with Bavaria', the official retorted dispassionately, and the man was allowed to go. The reverend, who was in a very good mood, invited me at that point to have a lemon squash.

Hindenburg[xviii] has beaten the Russians in East Prussia. Germany is promising Poland self-government. Pope Pius X, has died. Brussels has been captured. The *Emperor William the Great* has been sunk, and His Imperial Majesty's ship *Magdeburg* in the Gulf of Finland. Off Heligoland, two German cruisers and two destroyers were obliterated, and yesterday the French Government left Paris!

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[p. 26]

"*London-Hampstead, Haverstock-Hill, September 1914*"

As from yesterday I've been living in London, more exactly in the villa suburb of Hampstead, and I have nice little room on the first floor of Mrs. v. L.'s villa. Last year I was here with my mother for the

Wagner Festival performances in Covent Garden under Nikisch's direction[xix] — and today? The maid brought me early-breakfast in bed and then ran me a bath. When I had got dressed, I couldn't find the lady of the house anywhere about, because she had gone to the races. I sat down in the garden and set about 'eternalising' the last few days of events.

The War, which has intervened in all affairs, confirming them or dissolving them, has also wafted around the holiday home of Mr Mather Smith. One guest after another had left the increasingly inhospitable house. René had returned to Paris and will probably soon be sent to the Front. Ted was collected by his father. There was no money in the house, beds weren't being made any more, boots no longer being polished, the maid had been dismissed, Miss Lilian ate elsewhere, the Reverend came across only every few days from Dover. For hours on end I stood with Keith on the railway station and watched the trains full of very young volunteers, all waving little flags, roll past. On the compartment doors stood in chalk: 'To Berlin' or 'Hang the Kaiser'. Keith also told me secretively that Lord Kitchener was said to be collecting together a Russian Army in Scotland, which had landed there from the White Sea, and was now being transported at night via Hastings to France, in order there unexpectedly to confront the German Front. The following night I did go to the railway station and really did see troops in dark-grey uniforms, who could be Russians transferring ship. I thought I had to report this to my people at home. Mrs. v. L. had written down for me the address of Eliassen & Co, in Rotterdam, to whom I could address myself and who would pass on my letters. I [p. 27] wrote that very night, sealed the letter and posted it in the box in the early morning. As bad luck would have it, there was a placard out that morning, which announced that in future all letters posted for abroad would be opened by the censor and be checked through as with regard to their content. I was resigned now to being arrested as a spy, one more worry and trouble. It happened also that even Keith was taken away by his father, a vicar in London, and I discovered that the reason for this was because the ex-reverend and Miss Lilian, who was not at all his sister, were living together out of wedlock, while at the same time he was no longer sending his wife, who lived apart from him, any money. Nice religious circumstance in Puritanical England!

I was sent a summons from the police chief of police. Hello! That's my letter, but now I couldn't care less about anything. But the old gentleman just said that Miss Lilian had been to him and had reported me as a possible spy. I retorted immediately by telling him who and what this lady was. Thereupon the reverend received a summons, and when he came back with his 'sister', they both implored me to forget everything, so that he would not lose his officer's post. I telegraphed Mrs. v. L., asking whether I could come to her in London, and she answered straightaway 'Yes', Miss Lilian helped me to pack, and the reverend once again dragged the trunk single-handed to the railway station.

At eight o'clock in the evening my train arrived in London, Mrs. v. L., dressed in fine style, a Chinese dog under her arm, welcomed me. Mr. Maier, an old diamond trader, who had lived for twenty years in her household and who has had to play the indulgent Cicisbeo ('companion'), stood next to her. We went to Great Portland Street, to a sumptuous restaurant, where I had the first proper meal since Berlin. The company, too, of the doctor who once operated on Emperor Frederick III.[xx] I felt I was in a completely different atmosphere, no trace of the war was anywhere to be felt. Mr. Mackenzie, too, also thought that all would be 'over' by Christmas. Then [p. 28] we travelled on further in the car to Albany Street, where I registered myself with the police; my English name aroused some commiserative and bewildered remarks.

My bedroom is very pleasant, lighting everywhere, cold and hot water. Mrs. v. L., in her Rococo boudoir, still playing with her lapdogs, poured out a whisky and soda, while Mr. Maier proffered me 'Turkish Glory' cigarettes. I asked about Herr v. L., my grandfather's old business friend, who for two years had been living in Cape Town, but was soon expected back, about Cyril, the son, who in one year had frittered away fifteen thousand pounds and seemed now to be married, about Phyllis, the beautiful daughter, who was also married, but following a fall from the window had become insane.

'*Such is life*' sighed Mrs. V. L. and poured herself another whisky.

So, now I'll have a look at London in War Time and in daylight.

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It's six o'clock already, and Mrs. v. L. and Mr. Maier have not yet returned from Newmarket. I myself have just had an interesting trip out! '*Business as usual*' stood quite re-assuringly on the Underground, which had taken me to Piccadilly. How is it possible that a World War is being fought apparently so much on the side lines? Right, then. Business is the main thing, and the sole cause of this War. The newspaper-sellers are shouting out: 'Samoa occupied.' England is the nation of traders, and a nation which straightaway turns into a pirate, once it feels its trading interests are under threat, or when it wants to expand them.

At first I noticed no trace of the War. There lay Apsley House, residence of the Duchess of Wellington, to whom I have a letter of recommendation. The elder Princess Elise, who gave it to me, had in 1849 been a dinner companion [p. 29] to Wellington, the Victor of Waterloo. I examined the new, snow-white faÃ§ade of Buckingham Palace, and then the colossal statue of old Queen Victoria sedately enthroned in front of it. Two years ago the German Emperor and Empress had taken part in with the unveiling. In life, the Great Queen had always had to sit on a high cushion, as she was such a small person. During the Boer War,[xxi] she steadfastly knitted soldier's socks, and many a tear is reported to have fallen on her work. Ever since my grandmother told me that, I have kept the Queen locked in my heart. If she were alive today, she would certainly still be knitting, and by her tears the newspapers would have given the nation inspiration for the War. I marched down Pall Mall and counted ninety motor-cars; I threw a glance at the dead eyes of the abandoned German Embassy. On the square behind Horse Guards' Parade a very large tent had been set up, one which reminded me of Count di Luna's tent in Verdi's 'Il Travatore'. *Boy scouts* stood at the entrance; the interior revealed a table decked out in green cloth, at which in turn young men, after having had a shilling pressed into their hand by the recruiting officer, moved past and pledged their life to the Motherland.[xxii] '*God shave the King*', someone laughed. I moved back in a large circle, because a big man in khaki, who was jollily swinging his bamboo cane, was already coming up with an inviting look on his face, bent on dragging me into Kitchener's Army. Draping down from Nelson's Column was a long banner, which in giant letters carried the exhortation: 'England expects that every man should now do his duty'. That was noble and impressive. I walked on further to Piccadilly, where I went into Lyon's Popular[xxiii] to have a cup of tea. It was packed out, nothing but scurried-off French-chattering Belgians, whom I had thought much more modest. In front of the band there stood a notice: 'No German or Austrian musicians here.' Every sip of tea [p. 30] was interrupted by a national anthem; which had to be listened to standing up. Then came a piece of music, the melody of which was very well-known to me, but I couldn't remember its name. I went up to the band leader and asked him, as it happened, in German: 'Was that not Schuman?' 'Quite right', the band leader answered me in good German, 'from the F-Minor Sonata.' The notice-board and its mendacious statement annoyed me so much that I quit the restaurant. Outside came the shout: 'Togo occupied; great German losses at Mons.'

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Just now Mrs. v. L. gave me the first letter from home since the War started, it had come via Holland, and had been opened by the censor. I ran straightaway to the furthest corner of the garden. But, alas, I felt disappointed. The words from home sounded completely alien to me. I wasn't pitied for being able to stay with 'dear' Mrs. v. L., instead of, like my friends and relations, having to do military service. I was told not to spend any unnecessary money, as they could send me only the most essential. They told me the Kaiser had said that the War would end in our victory by Christmas, and for that reason everyone had to make great sacrifices; and I was having a pretty good time of it. I found that not one of my many questions had been answered; I, whose every thought is of home and everything to do with home; over in Germany, and at home. (My grandmother is in Schierke, my sister in Düsseldorf). Perhaps our flat would have to be rented out. I don't know, I am terribly sad and worry about things at home. This matter-of-fact-ness, which people here and over in Germany seem to have got used to, has something ominous about it. I have the feeling it's turning into a permanent state of affairs. Ah, and what Stella is doing, as well? No word about her; out of sight, out of mind.[xxiv] Yes, if I were [p. 31] at the Front now, people would think of me with more kindness, out of fear for me and because that's how things are at present. Can I help it if I have to sit around with strangers and be completely superfluous? This inactivity in itself is much the worse thing to bear. Mrs. v. L. is just coming in with her repulsive dogs; she calls them Pui and Nimke, and treasures these damn animals more than she does me. 'Let's go into Regent's Park', she calls out. 'I'm on my way!'

*

"*London-Hampstead, September 1914*"

Post again for me: hello, it's from Spain! Prince R. is answering from San Sebastian: 'Unfortunately our means do not permit us to pay for your journey to Spain, I scarcely have sufficient money for the staff at the embassy.' That was written by the representative of Germany at the Spanish Court, he himself being one of the richest princes in Germany; a noteworthy match for the behaviour of the German Consul-General in London, who 'could do nothing' for all the enthusiastic reservists. Because of this, three hundred of them had hired a ship at their own expense and at their own peril, and just as they were leaving port they were taken prisoner by the English and shut up in a concentration-camp. It seems to me that Germany has no need of its patriots overseas; out of sight, out of mind; I'm now experiencing this sad truth on all sides.

Another refusal. My school friend P.B., the son of the German envoy in Lisbon, writes: 'Unfortunately (all letters begin like that) we can do nothing. Young persons cannot be helped in any way to go to Germany, even my mother encountered great difficulties in travelling to here from Carlsbad, via Genoa and Spain. They've got thirty-eight German ships impounded here, and many hundreds of German men of call-up age; and thousands in Spain. Quite [p. 32] apart from the impossibility of getting there, the price of tickets has become exorbitant (time and time again, it's money that prevents men of military age from getting back home, money for which no representative of Germany abroad wants, can or is permitted to take on responsibility). At any moment now they'll be handing us out our passports, in case Portugal, as England's ally, declares war on us. I, too, would have preferred to disappear as a volunteer; but we can't do that (why? I have no idea). Everything upsets me greatly; in Oxford I got such good treatment. I shall never forget what I owe to Oxford.

Yours P.B.'

A curious mentality speaks out from all the letters I have received. 'I don't need to worry, and can ensconce myself in the corner, looking benignly on at the evil game.' My enthusiasm is turning into a vast bitterness. I shall read Schopenhauer's *Wisdom* once more; it stands above all the events of the Everyday, no matter how great these might appear to be.

*

"*London, September 1914*"

I have finally managed to have a word with Sir Henry L. He's in the position of Honorary Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, and owns the country's largest coal-mines. When I last saw him, it was in March, and at a masked ball in the garden of the Villa San Pancrazio in Taormina. In those days it was Harlequin who ruled over time; and what about today? — Sir Henry was amicability itself, but eliminated all other material from the conversation apart from memories of the delightful island, to the point where I gave the conversation, which for me was really expendable, a direct turn and asked: 'What's the situation now with the exchange of men not yet of military age between Germany and England; my birthday's in December…'

'Oh, I thought you were already of military age', Sir Henry answered with considerable doubt, and went on: 'There [p. 33] are probably still negotiations going on, but personally I believe that you will be in Berlin for Christmas. In the meantime I'll make inquiries. You are a guest in this country; you can hardly feel otherwise, since your family of course is of Scottish ancestry, and closely bound up with the history of this country.' I replied: 'In the age of national states, being ancestrally linked with two civilised nations politically hostile to each other, either becomes a stigma or a sign of disloyalty; while, if we take the higher European viewpoint, it is the opposite. I have to take account of present-day facts and gratefully stay mindful of my country of birth and education: that is only fair.' 'I understand of course what you are saying', he answered soothingly, 'I owe the most important part of my education to Germany; the fondest memories of my youth cling to Heidelberg. Let's not have these pointless discussions, the War throws a spanner into objectivity, and for as long as it lasts everyone has carry out the duties of day-to-day. Treitschke[xxv] said mankind and nations love

only things they understand; Germany and England do not understand each other at present, and hate each other because of it. You, however, do understand me, don't you?' — Without waiting for my reply, he added: 'I've got a box in the Albert Hall, wouldn't you like to accompany me there?'

We went there; the huge circular hall buzzed like a beehive, until everyone rising to their feet for the entry of the royal couple fell briefly silent, before breaking out in frenetic jubilation. I thought to myself: the King is really descended from pure German blood; does he not feel any pangs of spiritual conflict; or does he see himself as Albion personified? These families of international princely origins, linked a thousand-fold by marriage, ought really to embody the flower of European culture. Sir Henry drew my attention to a white-haired lady, dressed in black, the widow of Napoleon III, and whispered: 'I was recently in Farnborough [p. 34] Hill, where Empress Eugenie has set up her villa in a hospital for French officers; after taking tea, she moved across to the iron-barred gate of the park, where Prussian prisoners were being paraded past in her honour; she murmured clearly: "*Ah, après quarante-quatre années*…[xxvi] The Marseillaise sounded out, I had to stand up and listen to it, even if I did so in a slovenly manner; the old empress had also risen to her feet. She must have felt some satisfaction in the closing days of her life; but I too felt a surge of emotion, when Adelina Patti,[xxvii] wreathed in applause, sang the pageboy arias from *Figaro*. The audience of ten thousand listened breathlessly to the melodies of this genius from Germany, who occupied a victor's throne well above all feeling of national malevolence. Outside, after the concert, newspaper boys greeted us with shouts of: 'New Guinea occupied by the Australians; Germans retreat behind the Aisne; 150 guns and 6000 taken prisoner at Bitry.' 'Cholera breaks out in the Austrian Army; Vienna fortified; Residency removed to Salzburg' (Mozart's own city).' "Do you think it will all be over soon?" "Why not", came the smiling reply. "Come and visit me on my estate in Eastwood, where we will talk of Germany."

I've just got back from a splendid walk. In Apsley House, where I last was in the coronation year, I found that the Duchess was not *in town*. So I walked on further, to Kensington Gardens, and sat down in front of the Orangery (Queen Anne's); then I went into the castle, in order to see the room where Queen Victoria was born; she, the grandmother of the German emperor, who is her eldest grandson, and now the best-hated man in England. The room had its shutters down; time seemed to stand still in the little bedroom, giving a wonderful feeling of the *nunc stans*[xxviii] of eternity. Queen Victoria's mother was a native-born [p. 35] German; Princess Elise had told me of the many parrots which had been obliged to feed here during her cousin's visits, sixty-six years ago; and it's true, I did notice an empty bird-cage still standing in the next-door room. I sat down on a bench in the small private garden, which was full of old-fashioned plants in flower-beds, rising up in terraces; and I watched the three small cascades continuously flowing down, like time. How much young blood is flowing away like this, day and night, I mused. In the main part of the garden, children were sailing yachts on a large circular pond, and the grown-ups were joining in with the fun, as much as the children were themselves — oblivious of the way the world looks now. But, for all that, war was watching us from between the ancient trees; soldiers had set up camps in the meadow areas, horses were grazing, trumpet calls sounding out. In Hyde Park, the novice troops were at their drill, with more than just children's nannies watching them. On Rotten Row (*route du Roi*), I saw the King's younger sons out riding on their ponies. The arch in Hyde Park Corner was covered with giant searchlights, which at night were intended to scour the skies for Zeppelins. The street traders were selling Belgian flags and badges for button-holes. Next to Selfridge's, the first authentic photographs of the World War were on display, showing the grave of a Scottish Highlander in France, with his coat and his cap hanging over the wooden cross; then a mass grave for the German heroes who fell at Tannenberg, next to a pyramid of five hundred spiked helmets. Some richly clothed Belgian women were standing near me, making disrespectful remarks about this picture, so much so that I could do nothing else but say to them in English: *Well, what about the barbarous treatment of the poor negroes in the Congo?* However, they didn't seem to understand any English. [p. 36]

A street trader, who wanted to sell one of his Belgian flags to me as well as to everybody else, received an angry rebuff. I was very annoyed, travelled back home, and went into the garden to read *Summer Travels through the Palatinate* by Hansjakob;[xxix] which transferred me into a completely different world. Mrs. v. L. then gave me an English brochure to read, which was intended to jolt me back to the present: 'Why did Germany begin the War?' The text in it concerned the German War Party, which was said to have been directed by the Director of the German Bank, and Prince Fürstenberg, so that they could turn their financial and political plans into reality (Bagdad Railway, etc.). I was just pondering on the content, when Madame came running in like a fury and shouted out: 'Oh, these Germans, they have even shelled Rheims Cathedral,

and destroyed it.' In doing this, she looked at me with such evil in her eyes, as though it had been me who had given the order to start the shelling. The telephone called her away; I heard: 'Yes, I'm coming to Pagani's (Italian restaurant). What do you say to Rheims, Dr. Richard?' Without bidding farewell, she left the house. I heaved a sigh of relief. Dr. Richard is what I'd call a disagreeable person, whom I best avoid. His name is actually Dr. Richard Babenburger, but he has discarded his German family name and become a fashionable doctor to the English aristocracy in Cavendish Square. He regularly shared the whole gossip of 'Society' with Mrs. v. L., and is also the greatest German-hater that I've ever come across. 'He whose bread I eat, his praise I shout forth'; a practical, but a boorish doctrine.

In his speech from the Throne, the King proclaimed the sibylline words: 'We are fighting for a worthy cause and shall not lay down our sword until we have achieved it.' (The German Colonies?)

When I reported today to the police in Albany Street, I was given my English identity document with its validated photograph. In December I shall therefore turn eighteen years of age[xxx] and become eligible for military service. I went straightway to the American [p. 37] Consulate General at 4a New Bond Street, Eastcity, to make a fresh attempt at repatriation. The place was swarming with people. I set my wish down in writing, making reference to the American nationality of my grandfather, and handed this paper to a Secretary. Half an hour elapsed, and he came back, saying: 'Without papers', the Consul could not be of any help to me. Fine: nothing again. I shall write to my relatives in Boston, where Grace Lockwood,[xxxi] daughter-in-law of former President Theodore Roosevelt, can perhaps do something to help me. The Americans have after all taken on the work of officially representing Germany in foreign hostile territory. Something will have to happen soon; because four months from now it will be too late. On my way back home, I went into St. Paul's Cathedral, where a rogation service for the combatant armies was being held. The soft singing of the choir, the gentle acciaccaturas of the accompanying organ, the gathering dusk, which fluttered down from the arches like brown velvet, the whispering of the crowd at prayer, moved me deeply. Outside the traffic of the world boomed around the church; pigeons fluttered around the baroque statue of Queen Anne. Strange, the way these outer and inner impressions are for ever blotting each other out. The newspaper placards proclaimed: 'Antwerp in flames, 3000 English troops land at burning town.' At home, the first remittance of cash had arrived from Berlin, but it came together with a loss of eighty marks on five hundred. Mrs. v. L. was in a good mood, and wants to go with me tomorrow to the tailor's.

*

i St. Leonard's-on-Sea [also St Leonards on Sea, or St Leonards], East Sussex, has been a western suburb of Hastings since the late 19th Century.

ii There is a Hillcrest School, but in Hastings, not St. Leonard's. Since 1952 it has been known as 'Hastings Academy'.

iii The UK records of *Births, Marriages and Deaths* place a Robert Mather Smith in London, born Kingston 1876, married at St. Olave's Church and Parish, Southwark 1900; church demolished 1926; Smith died at St. Olave's Parish, 1930, age 54.

iv *The Bells of St. Malo* (1913), composed by William Rimmer (1862-1936).

v "*Hello! Hello! Who's Your Lady Friend? Who's the little girlie by your side?*" Composed by Harry Fragson (1869-1913); very popular in 1914.

vi *Damoiselle Chic* from *Parisian Sketches of 1914*, by Percy Fletcher (1879-1932).

vii *The Dancing Mistress* by Lionel Monckton (1861-1924); ran in the West End 1913/14.

viii *Puppchen, du bist mein Augenstern*; German Operette 1913.

ix Georges Carpentier (1894-1975), French heavyweight boxer.

x The *Kaiser Franz Garde-Grenadier Regiment Nr. 2* (Berlin): nicknamed 'Franzer' after the Austrian Emperor Franz I, first commander-in-chief of the Regiment (1814).

xi *Der Schrecken der Völker. Ein Weltroman*, by Ewald Gerhard Seeliger (1877-1959). Dunbar-Kalckreuth (p. 20) tells us that the novel concerned a newly-invented and terrible explosive, which was carried by aeroplane to Spithead (Isle of Wight), where it circled over the assembled British naval fleet, and destroyed it in a great clap of thunder.

xii *Heil dir im Siegerkranz*: unofficial anthem of the German Empire, 1871-1918.

xiii *Hanover* is the historical spelling; *Hannover* is the modern spelling.

xiv *terra incognita* (Latin) 'unknown territory

xv *Kaiser* (Emperor William II); born Prince Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albrecht von Hohenzollern, Berlin 27 January 1859, German Emperor and King of Prussia (15 June 1888-28 November 1918); died at Doorn (Netherlands), 4th June 1941.

xvi Since 1947 spelt *Liège*.

xvii Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860, German philosopher.

xviii Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934), First World War Field-Marshal, statesman, and German President, 1925-34.

xix Arthur Nikisch, 1855-1922, Hungarian, orchestra conductor.

xx The father of Kaiser William II.

xxi There were two Boer Wars: 1880-81 and 1899-1902. The second is the one to which references are made in *Männerinsel*.

xxii Dunbar-Kalckreuth calls it 'Fatherland' (Vaterland).

xxiii Lyons tea and coffee shops, established 1904.

xxiv Dunbar-Kalckreuth adds the note in German (p. 30, fn.1): "At her brother-in-law's, the later Reichstag minister Curtius." [Julius Curtius, 1877-1948]. The wife of Julius Curtius was Adda Carp (1883-1967), whom he married in 1905. Adda was the sister of Werner Carp, a German industrialist. Dunbar-Kalckreuth here creates a mystery.

xxv Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-96), German historian and nationalist.

xxvi French: 'Ah, after forty-four years'.

xxvii Adelina Juana Maria Patti (1843-1919), opera singer, was born in Madrid of Italian parents, and later became French by marriage. Her last performance before an audience was on 24 October 1914 (Red Cross concert at the Albert Hall for victims of the War). Dunbar-Kalckreuth (p. 34) indicates Mozart as the German genius behind the melodies of that night, not Adelina Patti.

xxviii *nunc stans* (OED): "Eternity or eternal existence, esp. as an attribute of God, conceived not as infinite temporal duration but as a form of existence not subject to the limitations of time, and hence involving neither change nor succession. Also occasionally in extended use, esp. with reference to mystical experience."

xxix Heinrich Hansjakob (1837-1916). *Sommerfahrten. Tagebuchblätter*. Stuttgart: Bonz Verlag, 1904.

xxx Dunbar-Kalckreuth appears to have been unsure of his pretended age. If he had been born on 20 December 1898, as stated, he would have been 16 on 20 December 1914. As he relates now, for his upcoming age on 20 December 1914 to be 18, his date of birth would have been 20 December 1896. In actual fact, as is now universally known, his date of birth was 20 December 1888, making his true age on 20 December 1914 to be 26. Dunbar-Kalckreuth gives Ascension Day 1915 (May 13th) as the last time he was in 'digs' with his own private bathroom (p. 99), which was the same day as he was escorted by a detective from Wandsworth to board *Royal Edward* at Southend. Details on a document of internee registrations uncovered by *manxnotebook.com* editor Frances Coakley and dated 22 May 1915, give Dunbar-Kalckreuth's age on entry to *Royal Edward* as "18". However, his age was not 18, but 26 (born 20 December1888). For an age of 18, he would have needed a date of birth of 20 December 1896. The same document details his address is Germany as "Berlin Bayrische Strasse 30", an address still extant in Berlin-Charlottenburg, where he was *per Adresse* (c/o) "Herr von Kalckreuth", his later stepfather.

xxxi Grace Stockpole Lockwood Roosevelt (1893-1971); married Archibald Roosevelt, 1917.

Background

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Any comments, errors or omissions gratefully received The Editor

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